



THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS

FIRST SERIES:

Bound East for Cardiff: *Eugene G. O'Neill*

The Game: *Louise Bryant*

King Arthur's Socks: *Floyd Dell*



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FRANK SHAY

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MAIN

BOUND EAST FOR CARDIFF

A Sea Play

By Eugene G. O'Neill

Bound East for Cardiff

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY EUGENE G. O'NEILL

As Produced at the Playwrights' Theatre
New York City

YANK	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	GEORGE CRAM COOK
DRISCOLL	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	WILLIAM STUART
COCKY	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	EDWARD J. BALLANTINE
DAVIS	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	HARRY KEMP
SCOTTY	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	FRANK SHAY
OLESON	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	B. J. O. NORDFELDT
A NORWEGIAN	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	DONALD CORLEY
SMITTY	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	LEW PARRISH
IVAN	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	FRANCIS BUZZELL
THE CAPTAIN	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	HENRY MARION HALL
THE SECOND MATE	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	EUGENE G. O'NEILL

Bound East for Cardiff

SCENE: The seamen's forecastle on a British tramp steamer — an irregular shaped compartment the sides of which almost meet at the far end to form a triangle. Sleeping bunks about six feet long, ranged three deep with a space of three feet separating the upper from the lower, are built against the sides. On the right above the bunks three or four port holes can be seen. In front of the bunks, rough wooden benches. Over the bunks on the left, a lamp in a bracket. In the left foreground, a doorway. On the floor near it, a pail with a tin dipper. Oilskins are hanging from a hook near the doorway.

The far side of the forecastle is so narrow that it contains only one series of bunks.

In under the bunks a glimpse can be had of sea-chests, suitcases, seaboots, etc., jammed in indiscriminately.

{ At regular intervals of a minute or so the blast of the steamers whistle can be heard above all the other sounds.

Five men are sitting on the benches talking. They are dressed in dirty patched suits of dungaree, flannel shirts, and all are in their stocking feet. Four of the men are pulling on pipes and the air is heavy with rancid tobacco smoke. Sitting on the top bunk in the left foreground a blonde Norwegian is softly playing some folk song on a battered accordion. He stops from time to time to listen to the conversation.

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In the lower bunk in the rear a dark-haired, middle-aged man is lying apparently asleep. One of his arms is stretched limply over the side of the bunk. His face is very pale and drops of clammy perspiration glisten on his forehead.

It is nearing the end of the dog watch—about ten minutes to eight in the evening.

COCKY: (A weazened runt of a man. He is telling a story. The others are listening with amused, incredulous faces, interrupting him at the end of each sentence with loud derisive guffaws.) Maikin' love to me, she was! It's Gawd's truth! A bloomin' nigger! Greased all over with coconut oil, she was. Gawd blimey, I couldn't stand 'er. Bloody old cow, I says; and with that I fetched 'er a biff on the ear wot knocked 'er silly, an'—” (He is interrupted by a roar of laughter from the others.)

DAVIS: (A middle-aged man with brown hair and mustache.) You're a liar, Cocky.

SCOTTY: (A dark young fellow.) Ho-ho! Ye werr never in New Guinea in yourr life, I'm thinkin'.

OLESON: (A Swede with an enormous blonde mustache—with ponderous sarcasm.) Yust tink of it! You say she wass a cannibal, Cocky?

DRISCOLL: (A red haired giant with the battered features of a prizefighter.) How cud ye doubt ut, Oleson? A quane av the naygurs she musta been surely. Who else wud think herself aqual to fallin' in love with a beauthiful, civil-may-care rake av a man the loike av Cocky? (A burst of laughter from the crowd.)

Save Change

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COCKY: (*Indignantly.*) Gawd strike me dead if it ain't true, every bleedin' word of it. 'Appened ten year ago come Christmas.

SCOTTY: T'was a Christmas dinner she had her eyes on.

DAVIS: [He'd a been a tough old bird.]

DRISCOLL: T'is lucky for both av ye ye escaped; for the quane av the cannibal isles wad'a died av the belly ache the day afther Christmas, divil a doubt av ut. (*The laughter at this is long and loud.*)

[COCKY: (*Sullenly.*) Blarsted fat'eads! (*The sick man in the lower bunk in the rear groans and moves restlessly. There is a hushed silence. All the men turn and stare at him.*)]

DRISCOLL: Ssshh! (*In a hushed whisper.*) We'd best not be talkin' so loud and him tryin' to have a bit av a sleep. (*He tiptoes softly to the side of the bunk.*) Yank! You'd be wantin' a drink av wather, maybe? (*Yank does not reply. Driscoll bends over and looks at him.*) It's asleep he is, sure enough. His breath is chokin' in his throat loike wather gurglin' in a poipe. (*He comes back quietly and sits down. All are silent, avoiding each other's eyes.*)

COCKY: (*After a pause.*) Pore devil! Its over the side for 'im, Gawd 'elp 'im.

DRISCOLL: Stop your croakin'! He's not dead yet and, praise God he'll have many a long day yet before him.

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[SCOTTY: (*Shaking his head doubtfully.*) He's baad, mon, he's verry baad.]

DAVIS: Lucky he's alive. Many a man's light woulda gone out after a fall like that.

OLESON: You saw him fall?

DAVIS: Right next to him. He and me was goin' down in Number Two hold [to do some chippin']. He puts his leg over careless-like and misses the ladder and plumps straight down to the bottom. [I was scared to look over for a minute, and then I heard him groan and I scuttled down after him.] He was hurt bad inside, for the blood was drip-pin' from the side of his mouth. He was groanin' hard but he never let a word out of him.

COCKY: An' you blokes remember when we 'auled 'im in 'ere? Oh 'ell, 'e says, oh 'ell—like that, and nothink else.

[OLESON: Did the captain know where he iss hurted?

COCKY: That silly ol' josser! Wot the 'ell would 'e know abaht anythink?

SCOTTY: (*Scornfully.*) He fiddles in his mouth wi' a bit of glass.

DRISCOLL: (*Angrily.*) The devil's own life ut is to be out on the lonely sea wid nothin' betune you and a grave in the ocean, but a spindle-shanked, grey-whiskered auld fool the loike av him. 'Twas enough to make a saint shwear to see him wid his gold watch in his hand, tryin' to look as wise as an owl on a tree, and all the toime he not knowin' whether t'was cholery or the barber's itch was the matther wid Yank.

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SCOTTY: (*Sardonically.*) He gave him a dose of salts, na doot?

DRISCOLL: Devil a thing he gave him at all, but looked in the book he had wid him, and shook his head, and walked out widout sayin' a word, the second mate afther him no wiser than himself, God's curse on the two av them!

COCKY: (*After a pause.*) Yank was a good shipmate, pore beggar. Lent me four bob in Noo York, 'e did.

DRISCOLL: (*Warmly.*) A good shipmate he was and is, none betther. Ye said no more than the truth, Cocky. Five years and more ut is since first I shipped wid him, and we've stuck together iver since through good luck and bad. Fights we've had, God help us, but t'was only when we'd a bit av drink taken, and we always shook hands the nixt mornin'. Whatever was his was mine, and many's the toime I'd a been on the beach or worse, but for him. And now— (*His voice trembles as he fights to control his emotion.*) "Devil take me if I'm not startin' to blubber loike an auld woman, and he not dead at all but goin' to live many a long year yet, maybe.

DAVIS: The sleep'll do him good. He seems better now.

OLESON: If he wude eat something.—

DRISCOLL: Wud ye have him be eatin' in his condishun? Sure its hard enough on the rest av us wid nothin' the matther wid our insides to be stomachin' the skoff on this rusty lime-juicer.

SCOTTY: (*Indignantly.*) It's a starvation ship.

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DAVIS: Plenty o' work and no food—and the owners ridin' around in carriages!

OLESON: Hash, hash! Stew, stew! Marmalade, py damn! (*He spits disgustedly.*)

COCKY: Bloody swill! Fit only for swine is wot I say.

DRISCOLL: And the dishwather they disguise wid the name av tea! And the putty they call bread! My belly feels loike I'd swalleyed a dozen rivets at the thought av ut! And sea-biscuit that'd break the teeth av a lion if he had the misfortune to take a bite at one! (*Unconsciously they have all raised their voices, forgetting the sick man in their sailor's delight at finding something to grumble about.*)

THE NORWEGIAN: (*Stops playing accordion—says slowly*) And rot-ten po-tay-toes! (*He starts in playing again. The sick man gives a groan of pain.*)

DRISCOLL: (*Holding up his hand.*) Shut your mouths, all av you. Tis a hell av a thing for us to be complainin' about our guts, and a sick man maybe dyin' listenin' to us. (*Gets up and shakes his fist at the Norwegian.*) God stiffen you, ye square-head scut! Put down that organ av yours or I'll break your ugly face for you. Is that banshee schreechin' fit music for a sick man? (*The Norwegian puts his accordion in the bunk and lays back and closes his eyes. Driscoll goes over and stands beside Yank. The steamer's whistle sounds particularly loud in the silence.*)

DAVIS: Damn this fog! (*Reaches in under a bunk and yanks out a pair of seaboots which he pulls on.*) My look-

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out next, too. Must be nearly eight bells, boys. (*With the exception of Oleson, all the men sitting up put on oil-skins, sou' westers, seaboots, etc. in preparation for the watch on deck. Oleson crawls into a lower bunk on the right.*)

SCOTTY: My wheel.]

OLESON: (*Disgustedly.*) Nothin' but yust dirty weather all dis voyage. I yust can't sleep when weestle blow. (*He turns his back to the light and is soon fast asleep and snoring.*)

SCOTTY: If this fog keeps up, I'm tellin' ye, we'll no be in Cardiff for a week or more.

DRISCOLL: T'was just such a night as this the auld Dover wint down. Just about this toime it was, too, and we all sittin' round in the fo'castle, Yank beside me, whin all av a suddint we heard a great slitherin' crash, and the ship heeled over till we was all in a heap on wan side. What came afther I disremember exactly, except t'was a hard shift to get the boats over the side before the auld tea-kettle sank. Yank was in the same boat wid me, and sivin inorthal days we drifted wid scarcely a drop of wather or a bite to chew on. T'was Yank here that held me down whin I wanted to jump into the ocean, roarin' mad wid the thirst... Picked up we were on the same day wid only Yank in his senses, and him steerin' the boat.

COCKY: (*Protestingly.*) Blimey but you're a cheerful blighter, Driscoll! Talkin' abaht shipwrecks in this 'ere blusheen' fog.] (*Yank groans and stirs uneasily, opening his eyes. Driscoll hurries to his side.*)

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DRISCOLL: Are you feelin' any betther, Yank?

YANK: (*In a weak voice.*) No.

DRISCOLL: Sure you must be. You look as sthrong as an ox. (*Appealing to the others.*) Am I tellin' him a lie?

DAVIS: The sleep's done you good.

COCKY: You'll be 'avin your pint of beer in Cardiff this day week.

SCOTTY: And fish and chips, mon!

YANK: (*Peevishly.*) What're yuh all liein' fur? D'yuh think I'm scared to—(*He hesitates as if frightened by the word he is about to say.*)

DRISCOLL: Don't be thinkin' such things! (*The ship's bell is heard heavily tolling eight times. From the fore-castle head above, the voice of the lookout rises in a long wail: Aaalls welll. The men look uncertainly at Yank as if undecided whether to say good'bye or not.*)

YANK: (*In an agony of fear.*) Don't leave me, Drisc! I'm dyin', I tell yuh. I won't stay here alone with everyone snorin'. I'll go out on deck. (*He makes a feeble attempt to rise but sinks back with a sharp groan. His breath comes in wheezy gasps.*) Don't leave me, Drisc! (*His face grows white and his head falls back with a jerk*)

DRISCOLL: Don't be worryin', Yank. I'll not move a step out av here—and let that devil av a bosun curse his black head off. You speak a word to the bosun, Cocky. Tell him that Yank is bad took and I'll be stayin' wid him a while yet.

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COCKY: Right-o (*Cocky, Davis, and Scotty go out quietly.*)

COCKY: (*From the alleyway.*) Gawd blimey, the fog's thick as soup.

DRISCOLL: Are ye satisfied now, Yank? (*Receiving no answer he bends over the still form.*) He's fainted, God help him! (*He gets a tin dipper from the bucket, and bathes Yanks forehead with the water. Yank shudders and opens his eyes.*)

YANK: (*Slowly.*) I thought I was goin' then. Wha' did yuh wanna wake me up fur?

DRISCOLL: (*With forced gaiety.*) Is it wishful for heaven ye are?

YANK: (*Gloomily.*) Hell, I guess.

DRISCOLL: (*Crossing himself involuntarily.*) For the love av the saints don't be talkin' loike that! You'd give a man the creeps. It's chippin' rust on deck you'll be in a day or two wid the best av us. [*(Yank does not answer but closes his eyes wearily.* The seamen who has been on lookout, a young Englishman, comes in and takes off his dripping oilskins. While he is doing this the man whose turn at the wheel has been relieved enters. He is a dark burly fellow with a round stupid face. The Englishman steps softly over to Driscoll. The other crawls into a lower bunk.)

THE ENGLISHMAN: (*Whispering.*) How's Yank.

DRISCOLL: Betther. Ask him yourself. He's awake.

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YANK: I'm all right, Smitty.

SMITTY: Glad to hear it, Yank. (*He crawls to an upper bunk and is soon asleep.*)

(*The stupid faced seaman who came in after Smitty twists his head in the direction of the sick man.*) You feel gude, Jank?

YANK: (Wearily.) Yes, Ivan.

IVAN: Dots gude. (*He rolls over on his side and falls asleep immediately.*)

YANK: (After a pause broken only by snores—with a bitter laugh.) Good'bye and good luck to the lot of you!

DRISCOLL: Is ut painin' you again?

YANK: It hurts like hell—here (*He points to the lower part of his chest on the left side.*) I guess my old pump's busted. Ooohh! (*A spasm of pain contracts his pale features. He presses his hand to his side and writhes on the thin mattress of his bunk. The perspiration stands out in beads on his forehead.*)

DRISCOLL: (Terrified.) Yank! Yank! What is ut? (*Jumping to his feet.*) I'll run for the captain. (*He starts for the doorway.*)

YANK: (Sitting up in his bunk, frantic with fear.) Don't leave me, Drisc! For God's sake don't leave me alone! (*He leans over the side of his bunk and spits. Driscoll comes back to him.*) Blood! Ugh!

DRISCOLL: Blood again! I'd best be gettin' the captain.

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YANK: No, no, don't leave me! If yuh do I'll git up and follow you. I ain't no coward but I'm scared to stay here ^{alone} with all of them asleep and snorin'. (Driscoll, not knowing what to do, sits down on the bench beside him. He grows calmer and sinks back on the mattress.) The captain can't do me no good, yuh know it yourself. The pain ain't so bad now, but I thought it had me then. It was like a buzz-saw cuttin' into me.

DRISCOLL: (Fiercely.) God blarst ut!

(The captain and the second mate of the steamer enter the forecastle. The captain is an old man with grey mustache and whiskers. The mate is clean shaven and middle-aged. Both are dressed in simple blue uniforms.)

THE CAPTAIN: (Taking out his watch and feeling Yank's pulse.) And how is the sick man?

YANK: (Feebly.) All right, sir.

THE CAPTAIN: And the pain in the chest?

YANK: It still hurts, sir, worse than ever.

THE CAPTAIN: (Taking a thermometer from his pocket and putting it in Yank's mouth.) Here. Be sure and keep this in under your tongue, not over it.

THE MATE: (After a pause.) Isn't this your watch on deck, Driscoll?

DRISCOLL: Yes, sorr, but Yank was fearin' to be alone, and—

THE CAPTAIN: That's all right, Driscoll.

DRISCOLL: Thank ye, sorr.

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THE CAPTAIN: (*Stares at his watch for a moment or so; then takes the thermometer from Yank's mouth and goes to the lamp to read it. His expression grows very grave. He beckons the mate and Driscoll to the corner near the doorway. Yank watches them furtively. The captain speaks in a low voice to the mate.*) Way up, both of them. (*To Driscoll.*) Has he been spitting blood again?

DRISCOLL: Not much for the hour just past, sorr, but before that—

THE CAPTAIN: A great deal?

DRISCOLL: Yes, sorr.

THE CAPTAIN: He hasn't eaten anything?

DRISCOLL: No, sorr.

THE CAPTAIN: Did he drink that medicine I sent him?

DRISCOLL: Yes, sorr, but it didn't stay down.

THE CAPTAIN: (*Shaking his head.*) I'm- afraid—he's very weak. I can't do anything else for him. Its too serious for me. If this had only happened a week later we'd be in Cardiff in time to—

DRISCOLL: Plaze help him someway, sorr!

THE CAPTAIN: (*Impatiently.*) But, my good man, I'm not a doctor. (*More kindly as he sees Driscoll's grief.*) You and he have been shipmates a long time?

DRISCOLL: Five years and more, Sorr.

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THE CAPTAIN: I see. Well, don't let him move. Keep him quiet and we'll hope for the best. I'll read the matter up and send him some medicine, something to ease the pain, anyway. (*Goes over to Yank.*) Keep up your courage. You'll be better to-morrow. (*He breaks down lamely before Yanks steady gaze.*) We'll pull you through all right—and—hm—well—coming Robinson? Dammit! (*He goes out hurriedly followed by the mate.*)

DRISCOLL: (*Trying to conceal his anxiety.*) Didn't I tell you you wasn't half as sick as you thought you was. The Captain'll have you on deck cursin' and swearin' loike a trooper before the week is out.

YANK: Don't lie, Drisc. I heard what he said, and if I didn't I c'd tell by the way I feel. I know what's goin' to happen. I'm goin' to—(*He hesitates for a second—then resolutely.*) I'm goin' to die, that's what, and the sooner the better!

DRISCOLL: (*Wildly.*) No, and be damned to you, you're not. I'll not let you.

YANK: It ain't no use, Drisc. I ain't got a chance, but I ain't scared. Gimme a drink of water, will yuh, Drisc? My throat's burnin' up. (*Driscoll brings the dipper full of water and supports his head while he drinks in great gulps.*)

DRISCOLL: (*Seeking vainly for some word of comfort.*) Are ye feelin' more aisy loike now?

YANK: Yes—now—when I know its all up. (*A pause.*) You mustn't take it so hard, Drisc. I was just thinkin' it ain't as bad as people think—dyin'. [*I ain't never took*

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much stock in the truck them sky-pilots preach.] I ain't never had religion; but I know whatever it is what comes after it can't be no worser'n this. I don't like to leave you, Drisc, but—that's all.

DRISCOLL: (*With a groan.*) Lad, lad, don't be talkin'.

YANK: This sailor life ain't much to cry about leavin'—just one ship after another, [hard work, small pay, and bum grub; and when we git into port, just a drunk endin' up in a fight, and all your money gone, and then ship away again.] Never meetin' no nice people; [never gittin' outa sailor town, hardly, in any port;] travellin' all over the world and never seein' none of it; without no one to care whether you're alive or dead. (*With a bitter smile.*) There ain't much in all that that'd make yuh sorry to lose it, Drisc.

DRISCOLL: (*Gloomily.*) Its a hell av a life, the sea.

YANK: (*Musingly.*) It must be great to stay on dry land all your life and have a farm with a house of your own with cows [and pigs] and chickens, way in the middle of the land where yuh'd never smell the sea or see a ship. It must be great to have a wife, and kids to play with [at night after supper] when your work was done. It must be great to have a home of your own, Drisc.

DRISCOLL: (*With a great sigh.*) It must, surely; but what's the use av thinkin' av ut. Such things are not for the loikes av us.

YANK: Sea-farin' is all right when you're young and don't care; [but we ain't chickens no more, and] somehow, I

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dunno, this last year has seemed rotten, and I've had a hunch I'd quit—with you, of course—and we'd save our coin, and go to Canada or Argentine or some place and git a farm, just a small one, just enough to live on. I never told yuh this cause I thought you'd laugh at me.

DRISCOLL: (*Enthusiastically.*) Laugh at you, is ut? When I'm havin' the same thoughts myself, [toime afther toime.] Its a grand idea and we'll be doin' ut sure if you'll stop your crazy notions—about—about bein' so sick.

YANK: (*Sadly.*) Too late. We shouldn't a made this trip, and then—How'd all the fog git in here?

DRISCOLL: Fog?

YANK: Everything looks misty. Must be my eyes gittin' weak, I guess. What was we talkin' of a minute ago? Oh yes, a farm. Its too late. (*His mind wandering.*) Argentine, did I say? D'yuh remember the times we've had in Buenos Aires? The moving pictures in Barracas? Some class to them, d'yuh remember?

DRISCOLL: (*With satisfaction.*) I do that; [and so does the piany player. He'll not be forgettin' the black eye I gave him in a hurry.]

YANK: Remember the time we was there on the beach and had to go to Tommy Moore's boarding house to git shipped? And he sold us rotten oilskins and seaboots full of holes, and shipped us on a skysail yarder round the Horn, and took two months pay for it. And the days we used to sit on the park benches along the Paseo Colon [with the vigi-

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lantes lookin' hard at us? And the songs at the Sailor's Opera where the guy played ragtime—d'yuh remember them?

DRISCOLL: I do, surely.

YANK: And La Plata—phew, the stink of the hides! I always liked Argentine—all except that booze, caña.] How drunk we used to git [on that, remember?

DRISCOLL: Cud I forget ut? My head pains me at the menshun av [that devil's brew.]

YANK: Remember the night I went crazy with the heat in Singapore? [And the time you was pinched by the cops in Port Said?] And the time we was both locked up in Sydney for fightin'?

DRISCOLL: I do so.

YANK: And that fight on the dock at Cape Town. (*His voice betrays great inward perturbation.*)

DRISCOLL: (*Hastily.*) Don't be thinkin' av that now. Tis past and gone.

YANK: D'yuh think He'll hold it up against me?

DRISCOLL: (*Mystified.*) Who's that?

YANK: God. They say He sees everything. He must know it was done in fair fight, in self-defense, don't yuh think?

DRISCOLL: Av course. Ye stabbed him, and be damned to him, for the skulkin' swine he was, afther him tryin' to

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stick you in the back, and you not suspectin'. [Let your conscience be aisy. I wisht I had nothin' blacker than that on my sowl. I'd not be afraid av the angel Gabriel himself.

YANK: (*With a shudder.*) I c'd see him a minute ago with the blood spurtin' out of his neck. Ugh!

DRISCOLL: The fever, ut is, that makes you see such things. Give no heed to ut.]

YANK: (*Uncertainly.*) You don't think He'll hold it up agin me—God, I mean.

DRISCOLL: If there's justice in hiven, no! (*Yank seems comforted by this assurance.*)

YANK: (*After a pause.*) We won't reach Cardiff for a week at least. I'll be buried at sea.

DRISCOLL: (*Putting his hands over his ears.*) Ssshh! I won't listen to you.

YANK: (*As if he had not heard him.*) Its as good a place as any other, I s'pose—only I always wanted to be buried on dry land. But what the hell'll I care—then? (*Fretfully.*) Why should it be a rotten night like this with that damned whistle blowin' and people snorin' all around? I wish the stars was out, and the moon, too, [I c'd lie out on deck and look at them, and] it'd make it easier to go—somehow.

DRISCOLL: For thè love av God don't be talkin' loike that!

YANK: Whatever pay's comin' to me yuh can divvy up

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with the rest of the boys ; and you take my watch. It ain't worth much but its all I've got.

DRISCOLL: But have ye no relations at all to call your own ?

YANK: No, not as I know of. One thing I forgot: You know Fanny the barmaid at the Red Stork in Cardiff?

DRISCOLL: Sure and who doesn't?

YANK: She's been good to me. She tried to lend me half a crown when I was broke there last trip. Buy her the biggest box of candy yuh c'n find in Cardiff. (*Breaking down—in a choking voice.*) Its hard to ship on this voyage I'm goin' on—alone! (*Driscoll reaches out and grasps his hand.—There is a pause during which both fight to control themselves.*) My throat's like a furnace. (*He gasps for air.*) Gimme a drink of water, will yuh, Drisc? (*Driscoll gets him a dipper of water.*) [I wish this was a pint of beer.] Oooohh! (*He chokes, his face convulsed with agony, his hands tearing at his shirt front. The dipper falls from his nerveless fingers.*)

DRISCOLL: For the love av God, what is ut, Yank?

YANK: (*Speaking with tremendous difficulty.*) S'long Drisc! (*He stares straight in front of him with eyes starting from their sockets.*) Who's that?

DRISCOLL: Who? What?

YANK: (*Faintly.*) A pretty lady dressed in black. (*His face twitches and his body writhes in a final spasm, then straightens out rigidly.*)

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DRISCOLL: (*Pale with horror.*) Yank! Yank! Say a word to me for the love av hiven! [He shrinks away from the bunk, making the sign of the cross. Then comes back and puts a trembling hand on Yank's chest and bends closely over the body.)

COCKY'S voice (*from the alleyway.*) Oh Driscoll! Can you leave Yank for arf a mo and give me a 'and?

DRISCOLL: (*With a great sob.*) Yank. [He sinks down on his knees beside the bunk, his head on his hands. His lips move in some half-remembered prayer.)

COCKY: (*Enters, his oilskins and sou'wester glistening with drops of water.*) The fog's lifted. (Cocky sees Driscoll and stands staring at him with open mouth. Driscoll makes the sign of the cross again.)

COCKY: (*Mockingly.*) Sayin' 'is prayers! (*He catches sight of the still figure in the bunk and an expression of awed understanding comes over his face. He takes off his dripping sou'wester and stands scratching his head.*)

COCKY: (*In a hushed whisper.*) Gawd blimey.

CURTAIN.

T H E G A M E

A Morality Play

By Louise Bryant

The Game

BY LOUISE BRYANT

As Produced at the Playwrights' Theatre
New York City

LIFE	KATHLEEN CANNELL
DEATH	JOHN REED
YOUTH	WILLIAM ZORACH
THE GIRL	MARTHA RYTHON-FULLER

The Game is an attempt to synthesize decoration, costume, speech and action into one mood. Starting from the idea that the play is symbolic of rather than representative of life, the Zorachs have designed the decorations to suggest rather than to portray; the speech and action of the players being used as the plastic element in the whole unified convention.

As the gestures and decorations of this play are as important as the written speech it is essential that theatres wishing to produce The Game should send for photographs and directions.

The illustration on the cover of this book is from a wood-cut by Marguerite Zorach suggested by the setting and action of The Game.

Staged and Decorated by Marguerite
and William Zorach

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The Game

AT THE RISE Death is lying on the ground at left, idly flipping dice. Now and then he glances sardonically at Life who is standing at the extreme right and counting aloud.

LIFE: (*Counting abstractly.*) Fifty thousand, fifty-one, sixty-five, ninety—She goes on through the next speech.

DEATH: Come come, Life, forget your losses. It's no fun playing with a dull partner. I had hoped for a good game to-night, although there is little in it for me—just a couple of suicides.

LIFE: (*With a gesture of anxiety.*) My dear Death, I wish you would grant me a favor.

DEATH: (*Grumbling.*) A favor. A favor. Now isn't that just like a woman? I never saw one yet who was willing to abide by the results of a fair game.

LIFE: (*Earnestly.*) But I want these two, whether I win or lose. I really *must* have them. They are geniuses—and you know how badly I am in need of geniuses right now. Ungrateful spoiled children! They always want to commit suicide over their first disappointments.

DEATH: (*Impatiently.*) How many times must I tell you that the game must be played! It's the law—you know it as well as I do.

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LIFE: (*Shrugging.*) O, the law! Laws are always in your favor, Death!

DEATH: There you are. I always said the universe would be in a wild state of disorder if the women had any say! No, you must play the game.

LIFE: (*Indignantly.*) Whoever said anything about not playing? All I want is your consent to let them meet here before the game begins.

DEATH: I'll bet this isn't so innocent as it sounds. Who are they? I haven't paid much attention to the case.

LIFE: Youth and The Girl. He is a Poet, and she a Dancer.

DEATH: A strong man and a beautiful woman. (*He laughs, ironically.*) Up to the same old tricks, eh? You sly thing, you think if they meet they'll fall in love and cheat me! (*Pause.*) Well, suppose I consent. What will you give?

LIFE: (*Quickly.*) I'll give you Kaiser Wilhelm, The Czar of Russia, George of England and old Francis Joseph—that's two to one!

DEATH: Now that's dishonest. You're always trying to unload a lot of monarchs on me when you know I don't want them. Why, when you play for them you almost go to sleep and I always win. No bargaining in kings, my dear.

LIFE: I'll give you a whole regiment of soldiers.

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DEATH: (*With scorn.*) Soldiers! What do you care about soldiers? Look at your figures again. You've been losing millions of soldiers in Europe for the past two years—and you're much more excited about these two rattle-pated young idiots. Your idea of a fair trade is to get something for nothing. You love too much. With such covetness how can you ever know the thrill of chance?

LIFE: (*Pleading.*) O I'll give you anything. (*Enter Youth, with hanging melancholy head.*)

DEATH: (Sshh! Too late! Here's one of them.)

LIFE: (*Turning.*) Youth! (*To Death.*) You've tricked me. You were only playing for time.

DEATH: Come, sister. Be game. All's fair in everything but the dice. And just think. If you win this cast the other is half won. They'll meet then . . .

YOUTH: (*Seeing the two and starting.*) (*To Life.*) Who are you?

LIFE: (*Anxiously.*) I am Life!

YOUTH: (*Bitterly.*) O, I am through with you. . . . I want none of you!

(*Turning his back and addressing Death.*): And who are you?

DEATH: (*Rising, with cheerful complacency.*) I am Death!

YOUTH: (*Taken aback.*) Death! How different from my dream of you. I thought you were sombre, austere;

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and instead, you're—if I may say so—just a trifle commonplace.

DEATH: I'm not as young as I once was. One's figure, you know—

LIFE: (*Delightedly.*) Ah!

DEATH: Look at *her*. A pleasing exterior, eh? And yet you wouldn't be seeking *me* if you didn't know better. Alas, my boy, beauty is not even skin deep.

YOUTH: That is true. (*Going to Death.*) Ah, Death, I have been seeking you for weeks.

DEATH: Yet I am always present. Where did you seek me?

YOUTH: (*Excitedly, with gestures.*) I tried poison, but just as I was about to swallow it they snatched it from me. . . . I tried to shoot myself. They cheated me; the pistol wouldn't go off.

DEATH: Well-meaning idiots!

YOUTH: So I came here to leap into the sea!

DEATH: Very good. Only hurry. Some one might come.

LIFE: Why do you wish to die?

YOUTH: (*Hotly.*) As if you didn't know. Did you not give me the power to string beautiful words into songs—did you not give me Love to sing to and take Love away? I cannot sing any more! And yet you ask me why I want

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to die! I am not a slave! Slaves live just to eat and be clothed—you have plenty of them!

LIFE: (*Sadly.*) Yes, I have plenty of them.

YOUTH: If I cannot have love to warm me, I cannot create beauty. And if I cannot create beauty, I will not live!

LIFE: Are you sure it was Love? I think it was only Desire I gave you; You did not seem ready for Love.

YOUTH: (*Passionately.*) Falsehoods. Evasions. What is Love, then? You gave me a girl who sold flowers on the street. She had hair like gold and a body all curves and rose-white like marble. I sang my songs for her, and the whole world listened. Then an ugly beast came and offered her gold . . . and she laughed at me—and went away.

DEATH: (*Laughing indulgently.*) That is Love, my boy. You are lucky to find it out so young.

LIFE: Now I know it was desire.

YOUTH: (*To Death.*) Why will she persist in lying?

DEATH: (*Gallantly.*) I am a sport and a gentleman and I must admit that Life is as truthful as I am.

LIFE: Listen, Youth, and answer me. Did your sweetheart understand your songs?

YOUTH: Why should she? Women do not have to understand. They must be fragrant and beautiful—like flowers.

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LIFE: And is that all?

YOUTH: (*Slightly confused.*) I do not know many women.

LIFE: I will show you one who understands your songs. She is coming here.

DEATH: (*Harshly.*) To leap into the sea, like you!

LIFE: Because she is lonely—waiting for you.

YOUTH: For me! But I do not know her!

LIFE: But she knows you—through your songs. . .

DEATH: (*Scornfully.*) And you have been seeking me for weeks! Are you to be fooled again by this tricky charlatan? You who have had enough of Life? There is no place for cowards among the lofty dead!

YOUTH: O Death, forgive me! Life, farewell! (*He stretches out his arms and turns towards the cliff.*)

LIFE: (*Crying out.*) Hold! We must play first. (*Youth stands as he is, with outstretched arms as they play.*)

DEATH: (*Jovially.*) So now it is you who are asking me to play! Come, Life do me a favor. Give me this one and the girl shall be yours!

LIFE: (*Excitedly.*) No. The game must be played. It is the law! (*Death laughs.—They go to centre stage and throw the dice. Death frowns and grumbles.*)

LIFE: (*Rising with a happy smile.*) I have won!

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YOUTH: (*Dropping his arms and turning slowly. Sadly.*) Then I am to live—in spite of myself. Death, I have lost you. Life, I hate you. Without Love you are crueler than Death.

LIFE: Soon the Girl will be here. Then you will think me beautiful.

DEATH: That's the comedy of it. You probably will, you know.

YOUTH: (*With a gesture of revulsion.*) Promises. Promises. Love comes but once—(*He breaks off and stares as the Girl rushes in. She almost runs into Life, then suddenly recoils.*)

GIRL: Who are you?

LIFE: I am Life.

GIRL: O, Life dear, I must leave you! I cannot bear you any longer. You are so white and so cold!

LIFE: What have you to complain of? Have I not given you Fame, and Worship and Wealth?

GIRL: What are all these . . . without Love?

DEATH: (*With a smile.*) What—you without Love? How about those who stand at the stage door every evening—and send you flowers and jewels? One of them shot himself because you stamped on his flowers. Believe me, my dear, that is all the Love there is—

GIRL: Love? No. That was Desire!

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DEATH: Bah! Desire when they seek you—Love when you seek them.

GIRL: No, No. Love understands. They didn't. They wanted to buy me in order to destroy me. That is why I stamped on their flowers.

DEATH: (*Humorously.*) Ah, the young. Incurably sentimental.

YOUTH: (*Impetuously.*) Good. I'm glad you did.

GIRL: (*Startled.*) Why, who are you?

YOUTH: I am Youth.

GIRL: (*Drawing back.*) Youth, the Poet? You? O I know all your songs by heart. I have kissed every line. Always, when I dance, I try to dance them. (*Looking around fearfully.*) But why are you here?

DEATH: (*Grimly.*) He came to throw himself into the sea!

GIRL: (*Alarmed. Clutching him by the arm.*) Oh, no. You must not. What would the poor world do without your beautiful songs?

LIFE: Do not be afraid, my dear, I have won.

YOUTH: (*Sighing.*) Alas!

GIRL: Why did you want to die?

DEATH: (*Slyly.*) His sweetheart left him.

GIRL: (*Drawing back coldly.*) His sweetheart! So he

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loves someone! I don't believe you. How could any woman he loved. . . . When he sings so sweetly—

LIFE: His songs meant nothing to her.

GIRL: Nothing! (*Going to Youth.*) O then she was not worth your love. She was like the men who wait for me at the stage-door; she wanted to destroy you.

DEATH: Such is Life, my dear young lady, Love is the destroyer always.

YOUTH: (*Bitterly.*) You are right. It is all a myth—Life, Love, Happiness. I must idealize someone, something—and then the bubble bursts and I am alone. No. If she could not understand, no one could understand.

GIRL: (*Eagerly.*) O how wrong you are! I understand. Don't you believe me? I have danced all you have sung. Do you remember "The Bird Calls?"

(She dances.) (*Youth watches with astonishment and growing delight.*)

YOUTH: How beautiful! You *do* understand—you *do*—Wings flash and soar when you dance! You skim the sea gloriously, lifting your quivering feathery breast against the sunny wind. Dance again for me. Dance my "Cloud Flight!"

GIRL: The loveliest of all! (*Remembering sadly.*) But I can never dance for you anymore. I came here to die!

DEATH: And you'd forgotten it already! O you're all alike, you suicides. Life's shallowest little deceit fools you again—though you have seen through her and know her for what she is.

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GIRL: (*Hesitating.*) But I have found Youth.

YOUTH: (*Swiftly.*) Yes, and Youth has found Love—real Love at last. Love that burns like fire and flowers like the trees. You shall not die. (*To Death.*) And I will fight you for her! Love is stronger than Death!

DEATH: Than Life, you mean. Think of the great lovers of the world—Paola and Francesca, Romeo and Juliet, Tristan and Isolde. I, I claimed them all. Who are *you* to set yourself up against such august precedents? (*To the Girl.*) You think he loves you. It is not you he loves, but your dancing of his songs. He is a Poet—therefore he loves only himself. And his sweet-heart, for lack of whom he was going to die. See! He has already forgotten her! (*Slowly.*) As you will one day be forgotten.

LIFE: (*To Girl.*) Why ask too much of me? I can only give happiness for a moment—but it is real happiness—Love, Creation, Unity with the tremendous rhythm of the universe. I can't promise it will endure. I won't say you will not some day be forgotten. What if it is himself he loves in you? That, too, is Love.

GIRL: To be supremely happy for a moment—an hour—that is worth living for!

DEATH: Life offers you many things—I but one. She pours out the sunshine before you to make you glad; she sends the winter to chill your heart. She gives you Love and Desire—and takes them away. She brings you warm quietness—and kills it with hunger and anxiety. Life offers you many things—I but one. Come closer, tired

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heart, and hold out your weary hands. See! What a pearl I offer—to kings and beggars alike. Come—I will give you *peace!*

GIRL: (*Spurning him.*) Peace? Do you think I want peace—I, a dancer, a child of the whirling winds? Do you think I would be blind to the sunlight, deaf to Youth's music—to my sweet applause, dumb to laughter? All this joy that is in me—scattered in darkness? Dust in my hair—in my eyes—on my dancing feet? (*Hesitating.*) And yet—and yet Life is so cruel!

YOUTH: (*Going to her.*) My dearest. We will never leave one another.

LIFE: She is mine!

DEATH: (*Sardonically.*) Haven't you forgotten something? The game!

LIFE: It is half-won. She too has found love.

DEATH: Ah! But in willing to die she laid her life on the knees of the Fates. So we must play for her. It is the law.

LIFE: O I am not afraid to play. This time I have you, Death.

DEATH: Have *me!* Ho, Ho. Nay, Life. I am cleverer than you. On this game hangs the doom of both!

LIFE: (*Astonished.*) Of both? *Furiously.* You lie, Death! I have already won Youth, he cannot die.

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DEATH: (*Laughing.*) Ho. Ho. Youth cannot die, you say. True. But the Girl dies if I win; isn't that so?

(*Life nods.*) Well, and if she dies, what then? He loves her, yet he cannot follow. Nay, he shall live—forever mute, forever regretting his lost love, until you yourself will beg me to take him!

LIFE: (*Falling on her knees.*) O Death, I beg of you—

DEATH: Ho. Ho. Life on her knees to Death. No, sister. I couldn't help you if I would. It is the law. Let us play.

LIFE: (*Resigned.*) It is the law. (*They go to the center of stage and play.*) (Joyously.) O I have won again!

DEATH: (*Blackly.*) (*Hurling the dice to the ground.*) Yes, curse the luck! But some day we'll play for those two again—and then it will be *my* turn.

YOUTH: Yes. But we will have *lived*. Until then, Death, you are Powerless. I fear you not, and I will guard her from you.

DEATH: (*Shrugging.*) Geniuses! Geniuses!

GIRL: (*To Youth.*) How brave—how strong—how beautiful is my lover! (*They go off stage with their arms about each other.*)

DEATH: Well, it was a good game after all. You see, that's the difference between you and me; you play to win, and I play for the fun of the thing. (*He laughs.*) But

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tell me, Life; why is it you make such a fuss over dreamers and care so little for soldiers?

LIFE: O, soldiers don't matter one way or the other to me; but some day the dreamers will chain you to the earth, and I will have the game all my way.

DEATH: That remains to be seen. But how about kings?

LIFE: Kings are *my* enemies. Do you remember how careless I was during the French Revolution? I've always had it on my conscience, and I think I'd feel better if I told you; whenever I threw a good combination, I—juggled the dice!

DEATH: (*Nodding.*) I'm not surprised. Heavens, aren't women unscrupulous! And yet they call me unfair. . . . Well, I suppose I've got to keep an eye on you.

LIFE: I warn you I will stop at nothing. By the way, what's the game to-morrow night?

DEATH: A Plague. And in that game, I regret to say you haven't a chance in the world.

LIFE: Don't forget I have Science to help me.

DEATH: Science, Bah! A fool's toy! I sweep them all together in my net—the men of learning and the ones they try to cure.

LIFE: But remember that the sun, the blessed healing sun still rises every morning.

DEATH: (*Irritated.*) Oh, don't remind me of the *sun!* (*He goes.*)

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LIFE: (*Beginning to count her losses again.*) Two hundred thousand, seventy-five, three hundred and ten. (*Looking up.*) I must never let him know how much I mind losing soldiers. They are the flower of youth—there are dreamers among them. . . .

CURTAIN.

KING ARTHUR'S SOCKS

A Comedy in One Act

By Floyd Dell

King Arthur's Socks

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY FLOYD DELL

As Produced at the Playwrights' Theatre
New York City

GUENEVERE ROBINSON	EDNA JAMES
VIVIEN SMITH	JANE BURR
MARY	AUGUSTA CARY
LANCELOT JONES	MAX EASTMAN

TIME: 1916.

PLACE: A summer cottage in Camelot, Maine.

Staged by Edward J. Ballantine

King Arthur's Socks

SCENE: The living room of a summer cottage at Camelot, Maine. A pretty lady of between twenty-five and thirty-five is sitting in a big chair in the lamplight, darning socks. She is Mrs. Arthur Robinson, or, to give her her own name, Guenevere. She is dressed in a light summer frock, and with her feet elevated on a settle, there is revealed a glimpse of slender, silk-clad ankles. It is a pleasant summer evening, and one might wonder why so attractive a woman should be sitting at home darning her husband's socks, there being so many other interesting things to do in this world. The girl standing in the doorway, smiling amusedly, seems to wonder at it too. The girl's name is Vivien Smith.

VIVIEN: Hello, Gwen!

GUENEVERE: Hello, Vivien! Come in.

VIVIEN: I'm just passing by.

GUENEVERE: Come in and console me for a minute or two, anyway. I'm a widow at present.

VIVIEN: Arthur gone to New York again?

(She enters, and lounges against the mantelpiece.)

GUENEVERE: Yes, for over Sunday. And I'm lonely.

VIVIEN: You don't seem to mind. Think of a woman being that happy darning her husband's socks!

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GUENEVERE: Stay and talk to me—unless you've something else on. It's been ages since I've seen you.

VIVIEN: I'm afraid I have got something else on, Gwen.—I'll give you one guess.

GUENEVERE: You can't pretend to be arting at this hour of the night.

VIVIEN: I can pretend, but I won't. No; it's not the pursuit of art, it's the pursuit of a man, Gwen dear.

GUENEVERE: Oh! Well, don't try to talk like a person in a Shaw play. I don't like this rigmarole about "pursuit." Say you're in love, like a civilized human being, and take a cigarette and tell me about it.

VIVIEN: (*Lighting the cigarette.*) I don't know whether it's so civilized, at that. You know me, Gwen. When I paint, do I paint like a lady—or like a savage?

GUENEVERE: Have it your own way. But don't tell me you're going in for any of this free-love stuff, because I won't believe it. You're not that kind of a fool, Vivien.

(*She darns placidly away.*)

VIVIEN: No, I'm not. I'm not a fool at all, Gwen dear. I know exactly what I want, and it doesn't include being disowned by my family and having my picture in the morning papers. Free love? Not at all. I want to be married.

GUENEVERE: Well, for heaven's sake, who is it?

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VIVIEN: Is it possible that it's not being gossiped about?
You really haven't heard?

GUENEVERE: Not a syllable.

VIVIEN: Then I shan't tell you.

GUENEVERE: But—why?

VIVIEN: Because you'll think I've a nerve to want him.

GUENEVERE: Nonsense. I don't know any male person
in these parts who is good enough for you, Vivien.

VIVIEN: Thanks, darling. That's just what I think in
my calmer moments. But mostly I'm so crazy about him
that I'm almost humble. Can you imagine it?

GUENEVERE: Well, what's the matter, then? Doesn't he
reciprocate? You don't look like the victim of a hopeless
passion.

VIVIEN: Oh, he's in love with me, all right. But he
doesn't approve of being. He thinks it interferes with his
work.

GUENEVERE: What nonsense!

VIVIEN: I don't know about that. But I don't care if it
does interfere with his work.

GUENEVERE: *I* don't interfere with Arthur's work.

VIVIEN: Arthur's a professor of philosophy. Besides,
Arthur was somebody before he met you. I'm dealing with
a man who's still on the make. He thinks if he had three

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years to dig at it, without me around to distract him, he'd put something big across.—I shouldn't be at all surprised.

GUENEVERE: Well, why don't you give him his three years?

VIVIEN: Gwen! What do you think I am? An altruist? A benefactor of humanity? Well, I'm not, I'm a woman. Three years? I've given him three days, and threatened to marry a man back at home if he doesn't make up his mind before then.

GUENEVERE: Heavens, Vivien, you are a savage! Well, did it work?

VIVIEN: Not a bit. He's a man of principle. He's bought a ticket for Boston, and he's packing to-night to start in the morning. Says he won't be bullied.

GUENEVERE: But Vivien!

VIVIEN: Oh, don't condole with me, Gwen dear. It's twelve hours before that morning train, and I'm not through with him yet.

GUENEVERE: (*Curiously.*) What are you going to do?

VIVIEN: Nothing crude, Gwen dear. Oh, there's lots of things I can do. Cry, for instance. He's never seen a woman cry.—Maybe you think I can't cry?

GUENEVERE: I've never seen you do it. It's hard to imagine you crying.

VIVIEN: I never wanted anything badly enough to cry for it before. But I could cry my heart out for him. I've

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absolutely no pride left.—Well, I'm going to have him, that's all. (*She throws her cigarette into the grate, and starts to go.*)

GUENEVERE: And what about his work? Suppose it's true—

VIVIEN: Suppose it is. Then his work will have to get along the best way it can.

(*At the door.*) Do I look like a loser?—or a winner!

GUENEVERE: I'll bet on you, Vivien.

VIVIEN: Thanks, darling.—And bye-bye. I'm going to Lance's studio.—There! I told you! It's Lancelot Jones, of course. Well, I don't care.—Wish me luck!

(*She goes.*)

GUENEVERE: Lancelot Jones! (*She sits still a moment, then resumes the darning of socks. Enter, from the side door, Mary, the pretty servant girl, who fusses about at the back of the room.*)

GUENEVERE: (*Absently.*) Going, Mary?

MARY: No, ma'am. I didn't feel like going out to-night. (*Something in her tone makes Guenevere turn.*)

GUENEVERE: (*Kindly.*) Why, Mary! What is the matter?

MARY: (*Struggling with her sobs.*) I'm sorry, ma'am, I can't help it. I wasn't going to say anything. But when you spoke to me—

GUENEVERE: (*Quietly.*) What is it, Mary?

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MARY: I'm a wicked girl.
(*She sobs again.*)

GUENEVERE: (*After a moment's reflection.*) Yes? Tell me about it.

MARY: Shall I tell you?

GUENEVERE: Yes. I think you'd better tell me.

MARY: I wanted to tell you. (*She comes to Guenevere and sinks beside her chair.*) I wanted to tell you before Mr. Robinson came back? I couldn't tell you if he was here.

GUENEVERE: (*Smiling.*) My husband? Are you afraid of him, Mary?

MARY: Yes, ma'am.

GUENEVERE: (*To herself.*) Poor Arthur! He does frighten people. He looks so—just.

MARY: That's what it is, ma'am. He always makes me think of my father.

GUENEVERE: Is your father a just man too, Mary?

MARY: Yes, ma'am. He's that just I'd never dare breathe a word to him about what I've done. He'd put me out of the house.

GUENEVERE: (*Hesitating.*) Is it so bad, Mary, what you have done?

MARY: Yes ma'am.

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GUENEVERE: Do you—do you want to tell me who it is?

MARY: It's Mr. Jones, ma'am.

GUENEVERE: (*Reflectively.*) Jones?

(*Astoundedly.*) Jones!

(*Incredulously.*) You don't mean—

(*Quietly.*) Do you mean Mr. Lancelot Jones?

MARY: Yes ma'am.

GUENEVERE: This is terrible! When did it happen?

MARY: It—it sort of happened last night, ma'am—It was this way—

GUENEVERE: No details, please!

MARY: No ma'am. I just wanted to tell you how it was. You see, ma'am, I went to his studio—

GUENEVERE: (*Protesting.*) Please, Mary, please!

MARY: Yes ma'am.

GUENEVERE: I don't mean that I blame you. One can't help falling in love.

MARY: No, you can't, can you?

GUENEVERE: But Lancelot—Mr. Jones—should have behaved better than that.

MARY: Should he, ma'am?

GUENEVERE: He certainly should. I wouldn't have thought it of him. So that is why—Mary! Do you

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know——? —— I don't know that I ought to tell you. Still, I don't know why I should protect him. Do you know that he is going away?

MARY: No ma'am. Is he?

GUENEVERE: Yes. In the morning. You must go to his studio to-night. No, you can't do that. . . . Oh, this is terrible!

MARY: I'd glad he's going away, Mrs. Robinson.

GUENEVERE: Are you?

MARY: Yes ma'am.

GUENEVERE: Why?

MARY: Because I'd be so ashamed every time I saw him.

GUENEVERE: (*Looking at her with interest.*) Really? I didn't know people felt that way. Perhaps it's the right way to feel. But I didn't suppose anybody did. So you want him to go?

MARY: Yes ma'am.

GUENEVERE: And you don't feel you've any claim on him?

MARY: No ma'am. Why should I?

GUENEVRE: Well! I don't know. But one is supposed to, Mary, you *are* a modern woman!

MARY: Am I?

GUENEVERE: I should think, after what happened——

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MARY: That's just it, ma'am. If it had been anything else—But after what happened I just wan't never to see him again. You see, ma'am, it was this way—

GUENEVERE: (*Gently.*) Is it necessary to tell me that, Mary? I know what happened.

MARY: But you don't, ma'am. That's just it. I've been trying to tell you what happened, ma'am.

GUENEVERE: Good heavens, was it so horrible! Well, go on, then. What *did* happen?

MARY: Nothing, ma'am.

GUENEVERE: Nothing?

MARY: That's just it.

GUENEVERE: But I—I don't understand.

MARY: You said a while ago, Mrs. Robinson, that you can't help being in love. It's true. I tried every way to stop being, but I couldn't. So last night I—I went to his studio—

GUENEVERE: Yes?

MARY: I told you I was a wicked girl, Mrs. Robinson. You know I've a key to let myself in to clean up for him. So last night I just went in. He—he was asleep—

GUENEVERE: Yes?

MARY: I—Shall I tell you, ma'am?

GUENEVERE: Yes. You must tell me, now.

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MARY: And I——(*She sits kneeling, looking straight ahead, and continues in a dead voice.*) I couldn't help it. I put my arms around him.

GUENEVERE: Yes?

MARY: And he put his arms around me, Mrs. Robinson, and kissed me. I didn't care for anything then. I was glad. And then——

GUENEVERE: Yes?

MARY: And then he woke up, and was angry at me. He swore at me. And then he laughed, and kissed me again, and put me out of the room.

GUENEVERE: Yes, yes. And that——that was all?

MARY: I came home. I thought I would have died. I knew I had been wicked. Oh, Mrs. Rob——

(*She breaks down and sobs.*)

GUENEVERE: (*Patting her head.*) Poor child, it's all right. You aren't so wicked as you think. Oh, I'm so glad!

MARY: But it's just the same, Mrs. Robinson. I wanted to be wicked.

GUENEVERE: Never mind, Mary. We all want to be wicked at times. But something always happens. It's all right. You're a good girl, Mary. There, stop crying! . . . Of course, of course! I might have known. Lancelot——we're too civilized. . . . Stand up and let me look at you!

MARY: (*Obeying.*) Yes ma'am.

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GUENEVERE: (*In a curious tone.*) You're a very good-looking girl, Mary . . . So he laughed, and gave you a kiss, and led you to the door. . . . Well! Go to bed and think no more about it. It's all right.

MARY: Do you really think so, Mrs. Robinson? Isn't it the same thing if you want to be wicked——

GUENEVERE: You're talking like my husband now, Mary. It's only a professor of philosophy who——No, it's not the same thing, as every woman knows. Run along, child.

MARY: Yes, ma'am. Thank you, ma'am. Good night, ma'am. (*She goes.*)

GUENEVERE: Good night, Mary. (*She returns to her darning. She smiles to herself, then becomes serious, stops work, and looks at the clock. Then she says*)—Vivien! Vivien's tears! Well!

(*She shrugs her shoulders, goes on working; then puts down her work, rises, and walks restlessly about the room. Presently a knock at the door. She turns suddenly. The knock is repeated. She is silent, motionless, for a moment. Then she says, almost in a whisper*)—Come! (*Enter a young man.*) Lancelot!

LANCELOT: Guenevere!

(*They go up to each other, and he takes both her hands. They stand that way for a moment. Then he says lightly*) —Darning King Arthur's socks, I see!

GUENEVERE: (*Releasing herself and going back to her chair.*) Yes. Sit down.

LANCELOT: Where's his royal highness?

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GUENEVERE: New York. Why don't you ever come to see us?

LANCELOT: (*Not answering.*) Charming domestic picture!

GUENEVERE: Don't be silly.

LANCELOT: I'm going away.

GUENEVERE: Are you? I'm sorry. Don't you like our little village?

LANCELOT: Thought I'd stop in to say good-bye.

GUENEVERE: That's very sweet of you.

LANCELOT: (*Rising.*) I've got to go back and pack up.

GUENEVERE: Not really.

LANCELOT: Going in the morning.

GUENEVERE: Why this haste? The summer's just begun. I hear you've been doing some awfully good things. I was going over to see them.

LANCELOT: Thanks. Sorry to disappoint you. But I've taken it into my head to leave.

GUENEVERE: You're not going to-night, anyway. Sit down and talk to me.

LANCELOT: All right. (*He sits.*) What shall I talk about?

GUENEVERE: Your work.

LANCELOT: You're not interested in my work.

GUENEVERE: Your love-affairs, then.

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LANCELOT: Don't want to.

GUENEVERE: Then read to me. There's some books on the table.

LANCELOT: (*Opening a serious-looking magazine.*) "The Concept of Happiness: By Professor Arthur B. Robinson." Shall I read that?

GUENEVERE: I gather that you are not as fond of my husband as I am, Lancelot. But try to be nice to me, anyway. Read some poetry.

LANCELOT: (*Reading from a book on the table.*)
"It needs no maxims drawn from Socrates
To tell me this is madness in my blood—"

(He pauses. She looks up inquiringly. Presently he goes on reading):

"Nor does what wisdom I have learned from these
Serve to abate my most unreasoned mood.
What would I of you? What gift could you bring,
That to await you in the common street
Sets all my secret ecstasy a-wing
Into wild regions of sublime retreat.

And if you come, you will speak common words"—

(He stops, and flings the book across the room. She looks up).

GUENEVERE: Don't you like it?

LANCELOT: Hell!

GUENEVERE: Try something else.

LANCELOT: No, I can't read. (*Guenevere bends to her darning.*) Shall I go?

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GUENEVERE: No.

LANCELOT: Do you enjoy seeing me suffer?

GUENEVERE: Does talking to me make you suffer?

LANCELOT: Yes.

GUENEVERE: I'm sorry.

LANCELOT: Then let me go.

GUENEVERE: No. Sit there and talk to me, like a rational human being.

LANCELOT: I'm not a rational human being. I'm a fool. A crazy fool.

GUENEVERE: (*Smiling at him.*) I like crazy fools.

LANCELOT: (*Desperately, rising as he speaks.*) I am going to be married.

GUENEVERE: Really!

LANCELOT: To-morrow—in Boston—to Vivien.

GUENEVERE: I congratulate you.

LANCELOT: I am in love with her.

GUENEVERE: Naturally.

LANCELOT: She is in love with me.

GUENEVERE: I trust so.

LANCELOT: Then why in the name of God should I be at this moment aching to kiss *you*? Tell me that!

GUENEVERE: (*Looking at him.*) It does seem strange.

LANCELOT: It is absolutely insane.

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GUENEVERE: Are you quite sure it's all true?

LANCELOT: I'm sure that I never would commit the rashness of matrimony without being in love—very much in love. And I'm sure I would not stand here and tell you what a fool I am about you, if *that* weren't true. Do you think I *want* to be this way? It's too preposterous.—I didn't want to tell you. I wanted to go. You made me stay. Well, now you know what a blithering lunatic I am.

GUENEVERE: It *is* lunacy, isn't it?

LANCELOT: It is.

GUENEVERE: Sheer lunacy. In love with one woman, and wanting to kiss another. Disgraceful, in fact.

LANCELOT: I know what you think. You think that I'm paying you an extremely silly and caddish compliment—or else—

GUENEVERE: (*Earnestly—rising*). No, I don't. I believe you when you say that about me. And I don't imagine for one moment that you're not in love with Vivien. I know you are. I could pretend to myself that you weren't—just as you've tried to pretend to yourself that I'm not really in love with Arthur. But you know I am. Don't you?

LANCELOT: Yes.

GUENEVERE: Well, Lancelot, there are—two lunatics here. (*He stares at her.*) It's almost funny. I don't know why I'm telling you. But—

LANCELOT: You—!

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GUENEVERE: Yes. I want to kiss you, too.

LANCELOT: But this won't do. As long as there was only one of us——

GUENEVERE: There's been two all along, Lancelot. I've more self-control than you—that's all. But I broke down to-night. I knew I oughtn't to tell you—now. But I knew I would.

LANCELOT: You, too! (*They have circled about to the opposite side of the room*).

GUENEVERE: Oh, well, Lance, I fancy we aren't the only ones. It's a common human failing, no doubt. Lots of people must feel this way.

LANCELOT: What do they do about it?

GUENEVERE: Well, it all depends on what kind of people they are. Some of them go ahead and kiss. Others think of the consequences.

LANCELOT: Well, let's think of the consequences, then. What are they? I forget.

GUENEVERE: I don't. I'm keeping them very clearly in mind. In the first place——

LANCELOT: (*Attentively*) Yes?

GUENEVERE: What was it? Yes. In the first place, we would be sorry. And in the second place——

LANCELOT: In the second place——

GUENEVERE: In the second place——I forget what is in the second place. And in the third place we mustn't. Isn't that enough?

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LANCELOT: Yes. I know we mustn't. But—I feel that we are going to.

GUENEVERE: Please don't say that.

LANCELOT: But isn't it true? Don't you feel that, too?

GUENEVERE: Yes.

LANCELOT: Then we're lost.

GUENEVERE: No. We must think!

LANCELOT: I can't think.

GUENEVERE: Try.

LANCELOT: It's no use. I can't even remember "in the first place" now.

GUENEVERE: Then, before we do remember. . . . (*He takes her in his arms. They kiss each other—a long, long long kiss.*)

LANCELOT: Sweetheart!

GUENEVERE: (*Holding him at arm's length.*) That was in the second place, Lancelot. If we kiss each other, we'll begin saying things like that—and perhaps believing them.

LANCELOT: What did I say?

GUENEVERE: Something foolish.

LANCELOT: What, darling?

GUENEVERE: There, you did it again. Stop, or I shall be doing it, too. I want to, you know.

LANCELOT: Want what?

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GUENEVERE: To call you sweetheart, and believe I'm in love with you.

LANCELOT: Aren't you?

GUENEVERE: I mustn't be.

LANCELOT: But aren't you?

GUENEVERE: Oh, I—(*She closes her eyes, and he draws her toward him. Suddenly she frees herself.*) No! Lancelot! No! I'm not in love with you. And you're not in love with me. We're just two wicked people who want to kiss each other.

LANCELOT: Wicked? I don't feel wicked. Do you?

GUENEVERE: No. I just feel natural. But it's the same thing. (*He approaches her with outstretched arms. She retreats behind the chair.*) No, no. Remember that I'm married.

LANCELOT: I don't care.

GUENEVERE: Then remember that you're engaged!

LANCELOT: Engaged?

GUENEVERE: Yes: to Vivien.

LANCELOT: (*Stopping short.*) So I am.

GUENEVERE: And you're in love with her.

LANCELOT: That's true.

GUENEVERE: You see now that you can't kiss me, don't you?

LANCELOT: Yes.

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GUENEVERE: Then thank God! for I was about to let you. And that's in the fifth place—that if we kiss each other once, we're sure to do it again—and again—and again. Now go over there and sit down, and we'll talk sanely and sensibly.

LANCELOT: (*Obeying.*) Heavens, what a moment! I'm not over it yet.

GUENEVERE: Neither am I. We're a pair of sillies, aren't we? I never thought I should ever behave in such a fashion.

LANCELOT: It was my fault. I shouldn't have started it.

GUENEVERE: I am as much to blame as you.

LANCELOT: I'm sorry.

GUENEVERE: Are you?

LANCELOT: I ought to be. But I'm not, exactly.

GUENEVERE: I'm not either, I'm ashamed to say.

LANCELOT: The truth is, I want to kiss you again.

GUENEVERE: And I—but do you call this talking sensibly?

LANCELOT: I suppose it isn't. Well, go ahead with your sixth place, then. Only for heavens sake, say something that will really do some good.

GUENEVERE: Very well, then, Lancelot. Do you really want to elope with me?

LANCELOT: Very much.

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GUENEVERE: That's not the right answer. You know perfectly well you want to do nothing of the sort. What! Scandalize everybody, and ruin my reputation, and break Vivien's heart?

LANCELOT: No——I don't suppose I really want to do any of those things.

GUENEVERE: Then do you want to conduct a secret and vulgar intrigue that will end either in mutual disgust or in the divorce court?

LANCELOT: (*Soberly.*) No, not at all.

GUENEVERE: You realize, of course, that this madness of ours is something that might last no longer than a month?

LANCELOT: Perhaps.

GUENEVERE: Well, then do you still want to kiss me?

Think what you are saying. For I may let you, Lancelot. And that kiss may be the beginning of the catastrophe. (*She moves toward him.*) Do you want a kiss that brings with it grief and fear and danger and heartbreak?

LANCELOT: No. I only want—a kiss.

GUENEVERE: No, Lancelot. No. You have lost your chance.

LANCELOT: Kiss me!

GUENEVERE: Never. If you had believed, for one moment, that it *was* worth all those things, I should have believed it, too, and kissed you, and not cared what happened. I

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should have risked the love of my husband and the happiness of your sweetheart without a qualm. And who knows?—it might have been worth it. An hour from now I shall be sure it wasn't. I shall be sure it was all blind wicked folly. But now I am a little sorry. I wanted to gamble with fate. I wanted us to stake our two lives recklessly upon a kiss—and see what happened. And you couldn't. It wasn't a moment of beauty and terror to you. You didn't want to challenge fate. You just wanted to kiss me. . . . Go!

LANCELOT: (*Turning on her bitterly.*) You women! Because you are afraid, you accuse us of being cowards.

GUENEVERE: What do you mean?

LANCELOT: (*Brutally.*) You! You want a love-affair. Your common sense tells you it's folly. Your reason won't allow it. So you want your common sense to be overwhelmed, your reason lost. You want to be swept off your feet. You want to be *made* to do something you don't approve of. You want to be wicked, and you want it to be someone else's fault. Tell me—isn't it true?

GUENEVERE: Yes—it is true—except for one thing, Lancelot. I wanted you to sweep me off my feet—to make me forget everything. It was wrong, it was foolish of me to want it, but I did. Only, if you had done it, you wouldn't have been to "blame." I should have loved you forever because you could do it—that is all. And now—because you couldn't—I despise you. Now you know. . . . Go.

LANCELOT: No, Guenevere,—you don't despise me. You're angry with me—and angry with yourself—because

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you couldn't quite forget King Arthur. You're blaming me—and I'm blaming you: isn't it amusing?

GUENEVERE: You are right, Lancelot. It's my fault. Oh, I envy women like—

LANCELOT: Like whom?

GUENEVERE: Like Vivien—like Mary!—who can risk making fools of themselves—who forget everything and don't care what they do! I suppose that is love—and I'm not up to it.

LANCELOT: You are different.

GUENEVERE: Different? Yes, I'm a coward. I couldn't have gone to your room, like Mary. I couldn't have dared your scorn, like Vivien. I'm not primitive enough. Despise me. You've a right to. And—please go.

LANCELOT: I'm afraid I'm not very primitive either, Gwen. I—

GUENEVERE: I'm afraid you're not, Lance. That's the trouble with us. We're civilized. Hopelessly civilized. We had a spark of the old barbaric flame—but it went out. We put it out—quenched it with conversation. No, Lancelot, we've talked our hour away. It's time for you to pack up. Good bye. (*He kisses her hand lingeringly.*) You may kiss my lips if you like. There's not the slightest danger. We were—unnecessarily alarmed—about ourselves. We couldn't misbehave! . . . Going?

LANCELOT: Damn you! Good bye! (*He goes out.*)

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GUENEVERE: (*After a moment, in great relief.*) Well—that did it! . . . If he had stayed after that—good heavens! (*She shudders, smiles, and goes to the chair. She is placidly darning Arthur's socks when the curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN

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